

Valuation

Appreciative Inquiry meets the art of Focused Conversations: A tool for performance review of exempt administrative personnel at Kenyon College

Exempt administrative employees and their supervisors need ways to communicate openly and productively about their work together. This tool has been designed to structure such conversations. Using this tool, administrators and those who supervise them will have a chance to reflect on their shared objectives, working environment, and interactions with colleagues in a *focused, positive way*. Both participants in the conversation should be looking to identify positive experiences and interactions in the employee's work. Focusing on these positives, the two can then work together to develop ways to multiply and increase such successes. This process must happen at least once a year for each exempt administrative employee, but may be utilized more frequently if the employee and supervisor wish to do so. Because this is a tool to be used to facilitate discussion, a written summary of the discussion (not responses to the questions) is what will be submitted to Human Resources. An employee may submit his or her preliminary question responses if he or she so wishes.

A series of questions is presented that are to be answered prior to a face-to-face conversation between a supervisor and an employee. The responses may be in narrative form, bulleted phrases, or some combination. It is suggested, but not mandatory, for the supervisor and employee to share the responses to these questions at least a week prior to the conversation about valuation. The questions are ordered and focus on discovering how things have been; reflecting on what has worked; imagining or being inventive about what the future can bring to your work; and agreeing on the action to be taken.

There are 4 sections:

- A. What has happened since our last review conversation?**
- B. What's working for you?**
- C. You know how things have been. Now how can they be?**
- D. How should we take action?**

Here's a sample of how an Employee might answer the first question.

Section A: What has happened since our last review conversation?

How has your work been lately? (Both Employee and Supervisor respond)

- Think about your year and primary focus.
- Think about your job description.
- Think about how you spend your day.

Once again my year had a lot of variety in the work I did. From recruiting prospective students, to compiling data and information for Trustee meetings, to research for retention, to coordinating scholarships, to creating housing surveys and program statements. My primary focus was to stay focused on whatever task needed to be completed to meet a deadline. In a single day, I might have spent time reviewing his transcripts for enrolled Early Decision students, worked with you to determine data elements needed for a study, and compiled information for a new housing project. Much of what I did was research-based, which included working with others to obtain information before any analysis or interpretation. Assisting with the diversity efforts in Admissions and campus-wide felt very rewarding. Being a member of CAS (Committee on Academic Standards) was helpful with respect to a broader perspective on retention issues beginning with the student application process through their academic work at Kenyon.

- Diversity Work Group
- SOCY 292, taught class
- Liaison responsibilities SA and Acad Adv, in particular conditional enrollment and retention
- Valuations – on-going AI work

Each section also has optional questions. If the administrator who is being reviewed would like to respond to the optional questions, he/she should use a separate sheet for those responses.

The back of this sheet may be used for notes during or after your conversation.

VALUATION WORKSHEET

Instructions for Employee and Supervisor:

- Both the Employee and Supervisor prepare short written answers to each question in Sections A – D. Responses can be written or typed in the text boxes.
- If agreed upon, both exchange these written reflections at least one week before review meeting.
- Both meet to discuss each other's responses, share ideas, and decide on steps to take.
- Both summarize their discussion in writing, including steps to be taken, either during or right after meeting, signing and sending copy to HR to complete required performance review.

Section A: What has happened since our last review conversation?

How has your work been lately? (Both Employee and Supervisor respond)

- Think about your year and primary focus.
- Think about your job description.
- Think about how you spend your day.

Employee: The following are optional. You may answer as many as you like or none.

1. How has your job description changed or evolved over the time since we last revised it?
2. How has the feedback you've received from your supervisor or others helped you do your job?

Section B: What's working for you?

Describe a few key successes you've had in your work since our last review conversation. (Both Employee and Supervisor respond)

Employee: The following are optional. You may answer as many as you like or none.

1. What working relationships do you most value?
2. What powers you through your day or what motivates you in your work?
3. How do you think other community members would describe you?
4. What do you value most about your job?
5. What do you like best about working at Kenyon?

Section C: You know how things have been. Now how can they be?

What would you like to accomplish going forward? (Both Employee and Supervisor respond)

Employee: The following are optional. You may answer as many as you like or none.

1. What would you like this next year at work to be like?
2. How can your supervisor, your colleagues, and the College help you move toward your goals?

Section D: How should we take action?

What should our next steps be? (Both Employee and Supervisor respond)

Think about how what you do is important to the college.

Think about how we should communicate about important issues.

Optional question for Employee:

What can we be doing together to advance department or division goals?

Optional question for Supervisor:

Is there **one** thing that I could do for you that would enhance your work or help how you do your work?